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It will be seen that in all these cases the woman is a potential wife for the man she calls *wagun*, for he may have as his wives two sisters either synchronously or consecutively, and he is entitled to take his brother's wife after the death of his brother. If this marriage takes place, the terms for 'husband' and 'wife' are substituted for *wagun*. But as long as the *wagun* relationship obtains, certain restrictions are observed. I once saw Marotē pass near a log on which her *wagun*, Togen, was sitting. As she approached she called out '*Watagio!*' ('Look out!') Immediately he rose from his seat, and remained standing till she had gone. People who are *wagun* to each other may not eat in each other's presence. If this cannot be avoided, the woman must cover her face with her hood. They may not touch each other's body or hair. A man's wife's sister may not prepare his food. Sobak's wife's sister, Bawt, was divorced from her husband at Hanahan and came to live with her sister at Kurtatchi. In the olden days Sobak would, he told me, have married her, but he refrained from doing so in deference to the wishes of the priest, who discourages polygamy. Bawt and her three children, however, made their home permanently with Sobak and his wife, sharing their single hut. While his wife was paying a visit to her relations at Hanahan, both continued to sleep in the hut, but Sobak went to his *kiar*, Watchiu, to get his meals. (Thus precisely reversing the taboos observed among ourselves!)

Wagun may not address each other by their personal names, but may use adopted names, e.g. the woman may be called by the name she takes if her child dies. For example, Pesē's first child died when it could barely walk; since then she has been known as Tchinamoa—'mother of one (dead child)'. Matarē, her sister's husband, calls her by this name, never using the name Pesē.

These taboos are usually brought to an end when the mother or father of the woman dies. Ceremonial pudding is prepared by the woman and her sister. A length of *imun* (ceremonial currency of flying fox or porpoise teeth) is hung on a spear by her sister's husband, and put up beside her hut. The woman comes out with her hood on her head. Her *wagun* comes up to her and takes it off. The woman then takes possession of the spear and the *imun*, but at some later date she must reciprocate with another gift of like nature. The two families eat the ceremonial pudding together, and the *wagun* taboos then cease to be observed.

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In speaking of illicit

583 intercourse with another man's wife, they use the expression *gun*
[837] *amot*, which is fairly translatable by 'steal' and is applied also to acts of theft in the ordinary sense in which we use that term. It is, of course, dangerous to rely too much on linguistic evidence, but
[684] it is noteworthy that to 'steal' a man's wife and to steal his ceremonial currency were once bracketed together, by a man with whom I was discussing the subject of theft, as crimes belonging to the same category, and that in some cases the same penalty has been exacted for both. All the people with whom I discussed the matter in relation to marriage gave me the impression that no distinction existed in their minds between paying for a wife and paying for anything else of importance.

586 The rules governing the operation of the custom are entirely compatible with this view. If the woman refuses to perform the duties of a wife, her husband can, and does, divorce her and demand his currency back—he is not receiving what he paid for so he repudiates the purchase. But if she has cause to divorce him, he does not get his currency returned to him, the break-down of the transaction was not her fault. If she dies without giving
768 him a child, he will expect to be repaid, unless he receives a sister
● 587 in her place. Pinari told me that the currency handed over in respect of Riro, the wife of his son Wasē, who had died, childless, not very long before my visit, would be returned, except one string, which was to be retained by her relatives 'because her body stays here', the woman having been buried at Kurtatchi. I have not seen a similar custom recorded elsewhere. If her death
845 occurs in child-birth, and the child lives, repayment is made in
768 part only, one string being retained 'for the child'. But if the child dies too, the full amount is usually asked and given. For a wife dying after having borne more than one child, no repayment is expected—the husband has had his money's worth, so to speak.

562 It does not follow that the woman is regarded as the absolute property of the man to do as he likes with. That is definitely not
581 the case. What seems to me to be the crucial point was put very clearly by a woman, Matēv, on our way back from witnessing this very transaction, when the matter was naturally the subject of conversation. She said:

'Tab to wen nor a kiki pi mon.'
Thing pay we genitals of woman.

i.e. 'What we pay for is the woman's genitals.' That is to say,

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584 bashfulness. As a matter of fact, it was obvious, though not avowed, that a considerable amount of choice could be exercised by a woman, if desired, in that she could very probably get the man she wanted to enter into a clandestine association with her, which might eventually lead to marriage, as will be shown in a subsequent paragraph.

832 In discussing with the men what physical attributes they considered desirable in their women, it emerged that they prefer a light skin, specially one with a reddish tinge, which is much less common than the darker browns. The effect produced by cicatrization (this is described in detail on pp. 426–32) is also admired. 'That is a fine girl, she has marks all over her body,' is a typical expression of admiration. Upetanding, hemispherical breasts were also mentioned as adding to a girl's attractiveness. This characteristic is only to be found in girls who have not yet borne a child, after this the breasts sag and rapidly lose their beauty. Several girls singled out by name by various men of the village as being especially attractive physically, confirmed the verbal description given above (see Pl. 10).

It was more difficult to get the women to describe their ideal of male beauty. They do not like their men too thin, or too old. Some said they preferred men with little or no hair on their bodies. But, in general, they seem to attach more importance to the attainments of a man as a hunter or fisherman than to his physical attributes.

MARRIAGE OF BROTHER'S WIDOW

●587 Additional wives are not infrequently acquired by virtue of the custom that the brother of a dead man has the first claim upon his widow or widows, for whom he is not required to pay over any ceremonial currency. He is not absolutely obliged to take her. If there are several, they may be distributed among the brothers, or among other relatives also standing to the dead man in the relationship *kiar*—usually his ortho-cousins (mother's sister's sons). None of these need pay over any ceremonial currency in respect of the wives thus acquired by them. Whether a man takes over his dead brother's wives or not, depends partly upon whether he likes them, and partly on whether he can afford to keep them and their children. Sometimes other considerations weigh with him also. Patchip of Tabut has not married his brother's widow,

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though the other villagers are always asking him why he does not do so. He says he does not want to, because he is too sad over the loss of his brother. If another man wanted to marry her, he would be willing. 587 ●

The widow goes to her husband's brother as soon as the final funerary rites have been held (see Chap. XIV). There is no ceremony on such an occasion. She has (so far as I could learn, but it is difficult to be quite sure) little choice in the matter if her late husband's brother really wants her, but otherwise, should she prefer not to marry again, she will probably not be forced to do so. If she is old, she usually goes to live with one or other of her married children, who will support her. In several instances known to me, the woman chose to return to her own village, as Matēv did when her husband Boar of Saposa died. In her case it was clearly to her advantage to do so, since she holds a prominent position at Kurtatchi as sister of the *tsunaun tʃan*, and mother of his heir. Another Saposa man wanted to marry her, but she wished to come home, and her brother Pinari supported her. He told me that if it had been Boar's brother who wanted her he would not have objected, although he was glad to have her and her children at Kurtatchi. 587 768

If the husband's brother takes the widow, he is bound to look after her and her children, if young, or to make provision for them in some other way. Sometimes an arrangement is made with the woman's relatives, who may, and often do, take one or more of the children and bring them up.

If another man wishes to marry her, he gives an agreed amount of ceremonial currency to the deceased husband's brother, and one string to the woman's relatives: not more than one, as my informants were careful to explain to me, because enough had already changed hands on the occasion of her previous marriage. The children usually go with their mother to her new home, and I have never heard of a man refusing to take them. But sometimes one will go to her relatives by mutual agreement.

The custom of marrying the brother's widow is now falling into disuse owing to the discouragement of polygamy by the missionaries. 587 178

DIVORCE

Divorce is frequent and easy. The woman has as much right to demand it as the man, and neither party can deny it to the other. 586

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had two children. Pinari married her after Soli's death, and took one child. The other is being looked after by Soli's people at the village of Ruri. No children by Pinari. 595

11. Sang. Widow of Boie, son of Pinari's mother by another husband. At Boie's death Pinari took her according to custom. She has one child, whom Pinari also took. Pinari said she had no children by him 'yet'. She was still wearing her hair in the fashion of widows when I came to the village, but cut it while I was there. I think Boie had been dead for about a year. [587] [302 765]

At the time of my visit, Pinari was negotiating for a girl at the village of Ieta, on Buka, from which his first wife came. He had been over several times to try to get her, but she did not want him and always ran away into the bush. Her family were in favour of the match, so he probably got her in the end, but they were not forcing her. One night a storm blew down a large tree in the near neighbourhood of the village, blocking the road to it. Pinari told me that he was sure it was caused by magic made by Gomar to spite him, because she was angry that he wished to take another wife. [789]

While he quite clearly prefers Kwimau to any of the others, Pinari pays quite a lot of attention to all his wives, and to their children, whether they are his own or belong to a former husband. He is generous with tobacco, and when he goes to a plantation to sell copra he often brings them some little present from the store. [157]

As a further example of the marriages that take place among these people, I give the history of Sobak, who is a commoner.

Marital history of Sobak

1. Sobak's first wife was Sieli, to whom he was betrothed when both were young. They had no children for some time, then there was a son, who is now about ten. Sieli has been dead for some years. 593

2. His second was Niwuts, whom he married when he was older but she quite a child. He divorced her 'because she had a sore' (probably a tropical ulcer, these being frequent and often very bad in this region). He told me that he said to her: 'You go back to your own village, I don't want to be married to you.' There were no children. She now lives alone at Gowē, a village farther down the coast. She has not remarried. [586] [164]

3. His third, with whom he lives at present, is Tsonakets, who was previously divorced from Takoi of Hanahan (a village on the east coast of Buka), for what reason I do not know. Takoi told Sobak he could have her if he liked. Sobak consulted Pinari, who approved, and had her brought over to Kurtatchi. She has a son, now in his teens, whom

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On the present occasion the mother, a very old woman, had

her body smeared with black paint, which was also matted into thick blobs in her hair. The widow showed none of these traditional signs of mourning, contrary to the old custom, which prescribed that the widow must put ashes on her hair and skin and must have her arms and legs rubbed with the skin of a banana which has been dipped in a mixture of red ochre and coco-nut oil. This she had to retain all the time she remained in the house. She may not eat whatever food was last eaten by her husband previous to his death. In the olden days, at the end of the period of mourning she would have become the wife of his brother, but this practice has been given up in deference to the wishes of the missionary, who encourages, while not enforcing, monogamy. It is now becoming customary for a widow not to marry again, but if a man loses his wife he usually takes another.

765 302 178 [587 797]

Fate of the soul

I was told by one of the principal men of the village that in the olden times they thought the spirit (*abiap* in the Petats dialect, equivalent to the Kurtatchi *abia*, not to *urar* which is represented by *amat*) of the dead man came out of the hole where he was buried and came back and stayed in his house, so they destroyed the house and by this means destroyed the *abiap*. The dead man's coco-nut palms and other property were also destroyed. Now the mission has taught them to believe that the *abiap* 'goes up on top' and does not come back.

775 768 [797]

It is thought that the *abiap* goes about looking for the person who had poisoned him. When it has found him it tells him: 'You poisoned me, you will die soon.' Soon after the man dies, and the people know it was he who poisoned the other man. This belief appears to be held still, though it is no longer customary, as in the olden days, to put a piece of bamboo through the wall of the house and question it as to who was responsible for the death. It was supposed to move about and thus to indicate the answer. They say it does not work at Petats any more, but assert that it still acts at Lontis.

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Disposal of the dead man's possessions

In the case of Tsirisia, his pigs had been eaten by his relatives during his illness, at his own request. No further destruction of

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